

Vocabulary

Acid

capable of reacting with and dissolving certain metals to form salts; having a sour taste; a substance capable of giving up a proton

Adaptations

an organism's adjustment to environmental conditions that makes it more fit for survival

Advocacy

the active support of a cause

Alpha

a male (elephant seal) that has secured dominance over other males for mating rights

Blubber

the thick layer of fat between skin and muscle layers of marine mammals, a way of storing energy when food is available that keeps elephant seals warm in cold water

Bull

an adult male elephant seal (also, adult male cattle and elk)

Carrying capacity

maximum population of a species that can be sustained in a habitat over the long term; usually refers to a particular species, but can be applied to more than one

Conservation

the wise and careful use of earth's resources

Consumer

a species that relies on other plants or animals for food

Cow

adult female elephant seal (also, adult female cattle and elk)

Delayed Implantation

for elephant seals, the fertilized egg floats in the uterus for up to 3 months before it implants and develops into a fetus

Diatoms

tiny, single-celled algae that form at the bottom of the food pyramid

Dominance

high status in a social group

El Niño

a warm ocean current that develops along the coast of Ecuador and Peru and can cause catastrophic weather conditions

Endangered

threatened with extinction

Environmentally Friendly

behaviors, actions, or products toward a healthy environment

Extinction

the condition of being gone forever

Fetus

a developing organism, prior to birth

First order consumer

an organism, usually an animal, that feeds on plants or other animals

Food chain

a series of organisms linked together by their feeding habits

Food pyramid

a diagram that shows the relationship between producers and consumers in a food web

Forage

search for food

Fourth order consumer

an organism at the top of the food pyramid

Gestation

time between fertilization and the birth of an offspring

Habitat

the natural environment of an organism; place that is natural for the life and growth of an organism, "address"

Harem

a group of females associated with one male for protection and reproduction (elephant seals and tule elk form harems)

Haul-out

the place where a seal or sea lion comes to land to rest, mate, molt or give birth; the act of coming out of the ocean and onto shore

Krill

small marine crustaceans that are the major food source of baleen whales, but also eaten by elephant seals

Metabolism

the sum total of chemical changes that occur in an organism, elephant seals break down blubber to provide energy. ex: low metabolism or high metabolism

Mission

an overriding goal or strategy used for management, what one believes in

Molt

to shed a skin layer and connected hair to make way for new skin and hair underneath

National Park System

areas of national significance, scenic beauty, or historic importance, preserved for the use and enjoyment of this and future generations

National Park Service

people who manage the National Park System

National Seashore

an area of seacoast set aside and preserved for the public good

Niche

the ecological role, position, or function of an organism in a community of plants and animals, "profession"

Phytoplankton

plankton of plant origin

Pinniped

order of mammals including seals, sea lions, and walruses

Plankton

microscopic plants and animals floating on the ocean's surface; the primary food source of many marine animals

Population

organisms of the same species that occur in a particular place at a given time; a population may contain several discrete breeding groups or stocks

Preservation

protecting and keeping in an unaltered condition

Primary Producer

plant producing energy from sunlight

Proboscis

a long, flexible snout (nose)

Pup

a newborn elephant seal

Rehabilitation

restoration to a condition of health

Research

scholarly or scientific investigation to understand how things work, used to form basis for management decisions

Restoration

returning something to its original state

Second Order Consumer

an organism, usually an animal, that feeds on other animals

Semiannual

occurring twice a year

Sleep apnea

cessation in breathing while sleeping

Social behavior

behavior between animals

Stewardship

taking care of the environment by being involved; taking action and participating in clean ups and education programs, helping others become more aware, and making responsible choices

Subadult 2

a male elephant seal with a definite large nose, (but not long enough to touch the ground while lying on belly), and no chest shield

Subadult 3

a male elephant seal with a nose long enough to touch the ground when lying on belly, a slightly developed chest shield, and some scarring

Subadult 4

a male elephant seal with a developed nose, (but not a fully developed notch above the nose) and a chest shield that does not rise above the eyes.

Third order consumer

an organism, usually an animal, that is a predator

Toxin

a poisonous substance

Value

an amount considered to be an equal exchange for something else

Weaned

no longer receiving nourishment through nursing

Weaner

a pup that no longer relies on mothers' milk, under one year of age

Worth

the quality of something that makes it desirable, useful, or valuable

Yearling

an elephant seal that is one year old and has not completed its second year, harbor seal size, blonder, and smaller than all other adults on the beach

Zooplankton

small (often microscopic) aquatic animals suspended or weakly swimming in water